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THREE DAYS

IN THE

LIFE OF A FATHER.

From the French of

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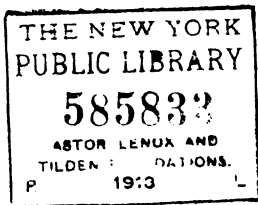
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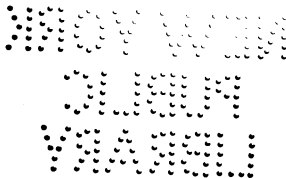
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1867



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THREE DAYS

IN THE

LIFE OF A FATHER.

ALL is truth in what one is about to read ; nothing is supposed but the form. The author speaks as having written from hour to hour, while, in fact, it was not until the three days had passed away that the idea of writing occurred to him.

They were, however, days such as those of which every hour, every moment, stamps its impress on the soul; thus it is not fiction to recount them as present.

Are any astonished that three days can fill so many pages?

Three days, in joy, how short! in affliction, how long! Happiness is quickly related; at the outset, one thinks that it will never end; shortly one perceives that it is finished, that it is but telling over and over the same tale. Joy seems to be productive, but it is sorrow which is

really so. Three days in sorrow is a lifetime. This is, then, the life I would recount; nor is it more my own than that of many others. I do not solicit exceptional sympathy under a case of trial, uncommon, extraordinary. Alas! on the contrary, I come to offer sympathy to many a heart struck by a similar blow. But I hope it will not be a barren sympathy to such, if, in recounting all my weakness, I tell them *where* I found strength. Perhaps it may do some good to a few.

Let no one misunderstand the intention or the sense in the constant use of the *I* and *we*, which I so little fear to repeat. I do not appear in these pages for my own sake, nor would I for anything but the opportunity of considering, as in the presence of God, certain facts, certain ideas. If I take these facts from my own history, and these thoughts from my own heart, it is as if I were to take them from the history and heart of any one else. One word more—The father will speak much of the child, much of himself, but little of the mother. Is it necessary to say that this will not be egotism, but respect for that suffering which any analysis would probe and publicity profane?

And now ye hours of mourning return, repeat

what ye ere-while said to me, that I may recount it to my brethren in bereavement!

Saturday Evening, half-past eleven.

I HAVE just re-entered my study; taken my accustomed seat at my writing table. Silence reigns in the house. All are asleep, or if they still weep, it is now silently, each one by himself, aside and before God alone. I have left the mother sleeping, thanks to fatigue. I tremble at the thought of her awakening. The lights are extinguished except the one in my room, and that in the chamber where reposes in her long last sleep our dearly loved little angel.

Death hath installed himself under my roof. We disputed with him his victim during two days; all was done that was possible to be done. God does not forbid this; God wills it.

Did we act with faith, with true faith; confidence in God, not in our own wisdom? I know not. With sufficient submission? I hope so. Yes, even in the moments when hope revived, we strove to remain quietly in presence of the sacrifice, and to offer in sincerity to God this precious treasure which He seemed to be giving back to us.

He has taken it ; but behold me already recompensed for my persistency in the offering. If I had allowed myself to believe it still mine where should I now be ? God, in those gleams of hope, would have seemed as it were to have been trifling with me. But no. I feel that he would but afford me the opportunity of giving to Him twice, yea, thrice, that which he was about to take. I have given ; I still give. " It is more blessed to give than to receive," Jesus said. If this be true of the world's other things why should it not be true of the children which God lendeth to us ? Why cannot we be happy in giving them to Him ? This is what I say to myself, and for certain I am right. But still there is within me this poor heart which reasons not, and which at times would take back in detail that which I believed to have been given entirely. The joys of the past two years with my little one pass and repass before my view, and, in spite of myself, I stretch out my hand to seize them again. It was the little infant in the springtide of its young life, the tender plant, which rejoiced the eyes while yet it could say but little to the heart. It was the young child in all its simple gracefulness, blended with a something, I know not what, which discloses

a heart already riper than its years. It was the joy of the house, the delight of young and old, the living plaything, loving, doubly loved without injustice to any, since brothers and sisters were the willing accomplices in this monopoly of love.

It was to myself a perpetual renewing of life, a relaxation from fatigue, a smile at the termination of all my hours of labor, the centre, and, as it were, the personification of all the happiness which God hath sown by the hand of others over the pathway of my life.

It was . . . ah what a pang in these words: "*It was!*" Yes; *it was* . . . and it is but three hours since I could say; *It is* . . . but three days when I said it with a confidence of which nothing announced the fragility.

She will never again come to tap with her little hand at my door; she will come no more to seat herself at my writing-table to take her accustomed childish review of books, papers, pens, pencils, the arsenal of my vigils; she knew them all as well as I did myself, and I can look upon nothing that she has not gazed upon, touch nothing that she has not touched. How I delighted in her happiness! How she seemed

almost to know how to give me this pleasure without giving me the trouble of again putting in order the objects of her curiosity! She took them up one by one, she put them down again one by one; each one interested her, each one for the moment occupied her entirely, as if she wished, by every one of them, that one day I should find her again entirely.

That day is come, and each object brings her back again to me. Sweet visions! which will later prove consolatory, but which can now but add to my regret. The child who came so full of life and playfulness to sit on my knee, I have just left silent for ever, immovable, insensible to all her little pleasures, which also had become mine. The warm rosy cheek, so often pressed against mine, I have left in the pallor and chill of death. The eyes, once beaming with intelligence and life are dim, and I have closed them for ever. . . .

To close the eyes of those who ought to close ours,—ah! to the flesh this is the great *non sense*, the highest contradiction; and who is he that hath so far conquered the flesh that it should be completely silenced, and he lament no more? Yes, when it fell to me to render to the child *these last offices*, a voice within me cried that it

was contrary to nature, and I hear that same voice still ; nor should I be a man if I did not hear it.

But another voice arises, and, without stifling the first, it recalls me to calmer sentiments.

Nature! By what right should I oppose the laws of nature to the will of Him who hath made them? Shall I not thus invoke, at my will, either nature against God, or God against nature? Nature, ought it to have saved my child, and God, ought He to save me, in a ship-wreck, from the hands of incensed nature? This is true contradiction ; but, nevertheless, it exists in me ; in me, who can only view things through the medium of my affections or my afflictions. But there are not in this world two powers. Nature! It is but a word. There is only God, who can be but one being, one power, one will, one almighty good also, whether this be visible to us at times or not. It is my glory to feel myself under his hand, in his hand. In nature! Does not the grass of the field wither before its time, the flower before it be fully blown? The grass and the flower, and my flower, my sweet flower which I mourn,—of all, all, God determines the duration ; it is God who giveth, it is God who taketh away. " He

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hath given ; he hath taken away." Blessed be his holy name!

But am I to believe that God designedly strikes the object most dear to us, in order to remind us that it is to Him, and to Him alone, that our love is due? Let us not be so prompt in deciding on the reasons for his dealings with us ; even in submission there may be temerity in this, and we may conceive a God which is not the true God. I should feel myself hard-hearted were I to go to a mother or to a father, and say to them that their child was taken away because they loved it too much. Ought I to exercise this hardness against myself? I do not think that God demands it ; nor do I think it would be the best means of making me give to God the love of which perhaps I gave too much the child. Let us not suffer ourselves to represent God as unmerciful, uncompassionate, even when He may seem to be so ; let us the rather seek another explication of his dealings, or, better still, let us not seek any. There is sometimes I know a sombre pleasure in thinking and speaking of ourselves as overwhelmed by a heavy hand, and suffering ourselves to be crushed. Thus this hand becomes the Destiny of antiquity, *not that of the God of the gospel* ; and the sen-

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timent to which we abandon ourselves is discouragement, or stoicism, two things equally unchristian. Let us humbly leave to God his own reasons, contenting ourselves in the assurance that he loveth us. This is the grand truth, that we can at all times courageously declare to our brethren, and to ourselves also. When He giveth, he loveth us ; when he taketh away, he loveth us still. Nay, even more. Love is always the same ; the demonstration otherwise, better so, without doubt, since he hath recourse to this. The Scripture saith, "Whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth." Does this declare that there are those whom the Lord loveth not? No. It saith only, that trials are one of the forms of his love. Again, let us rest here, striving only to believe that this form when it comes to us is the best.

Midnight.

THE clock has struck, a new day has commenced, the first that I shall pass without her. Singular propensity of our hearts, so constantly to bring back everything to ourselves, as if the universe, even ought to adapt itself to our sorrow ; it seems almost strange that midnight should arrive exactly at its time, that the clock

should strike twelve strokes exactly as it did yesterday, the day before, and as it usually does : I would have . . . what is it that I would have had? I know not ; but I have been as it were disturbed, that time should pursue its course so impassively by the side of such a crushing sorrow. Midnight! I ought to seek some rest for I have need of it. I must see her once more. I had determined not to return till to-morrow, but it is impossible. It seems to me that I shall forget her features ; it seems also that she is expecting me, and that it would pain her to wait till to-morrow. I will go then. How often I stole in, this evening, into that silent chamber, to gaze on that peaceful sleep, the contemplation of which seeming to shed over me more calm than I could obtain from sleep itself! How often her mother sought me to share with her the sweet spectacle! "If angels sleep," w said, "it must be so." My heart expanded in th serene atmosphere, and I returned more consol to my broken occupation ; and more than o page begun in painful travail, was accomplishe almost unconsciously, more tranquilly, more joyously, under this gentle and benign influence.

Let us enter. There she is ; such a death hath made her! If I could only forget th

is death, I could love her still better thus. Oh, Madeleine! Thou wast but a pretty child ; thou art beautiful now. The infantine calm has given place to a solemn, mysterious peace. The eyes seem closed but to gaze inwardly upon the rays of some unknown light. The lips which smile no longer seem ready to open with some revelation of another world, some hymn of heaven.

I scarcely dare, dear child, to kiss thy forehead as formerly ; death, ere it annihilate the earthly envelope of thy soul, hath set an impress of grandeur on thy brow which thy father contemplates with respect. It is no longer infancy, neither is it another age ; it is a something which no longer corresponds with our terrestrial division of time, of years, or series of years. The noble immobility of thy features portrays to me a world where time is no more, and where every age is the same. Blessed be God who thus speaks to me of immortality even by the view of death, and who can transform into a messenger of hope this poor body which the earth is about to devour !

And it has something else to say to me ; this serene face seems to indicate possession, plentitude ; these folded hands, prayer. A double

image of the life of heaven. The redeemed possess ; the redeemed pray. To possess, to ask, to obtain, to ask again ; to drink in full draughts of life, of truth, of peace, and to be eternally thirsty ; to implore and to receive every hour, in the same transport of thankfulness, of love, all that one has already received, and received for eternity,—such is the happiness of the redeemed ; and such is thine, my daughter ! Shall we have, we, who weep for thee, any part in this eternal prayer ? Wilt thou ask for us a little of that peace and that joy which will be accorded to thee without measure ?

I want to believe this, and shall I avow it ? This is what I most thought of, when I drew together those two little drooping hands, when I intertwined those little fingers, and sealed them with a kiss ; I have allowed the coldness of death to render them inseparable. It seemed to me that thy soul could not but do some little thing for us, for me, which thy folded hands would indicate, and I then beheld thee, not as lifeless on this funereal couch, but as kneeling before the throne of the Lamb in Heaven. Thus shall I henceforth behold thee whenever I pray myself ; thus shall I find thee in thought, before *God, until I meet thee in his presence.*

She had not yet prayed, for I am one of those who would not that the lips should pray before the heart can be in the prayer ; but more than once, of her own accord, she had joined with her little voice in the hymn we were singing, the melody of which pleased her, and expressed, without knowledge of it, the joy of the Christian's departure.

Where Jesus ever liveth, for us interceding,
Where happy saints in glory stand ;
By his leading joyfully on our way proceeding
Homeward to the heavenly land

These lines, which she never understood below, I see her understand instantly, the moment the heavenly land opened upon her view. I remember well the smile which used to light up her little face, when her dawning intelligence seized upon some new idea, or the external world, interrogated by her infantine curiosity, yielded up one of its secrets. How bright will that smile have been at the glorious surprise reserved for her in heaven ! How happy, how exalted is she in the discovery of that holy and mysterious union which the name of Jesus establishes between the two worlds ! Now she will know the meaning of what we sang, and

she will sing with us, with the saints in glory, Him who prayeth for us, who prayed for her before she knew how to lisp his Name.

And now, Madeleine, adieu for to-day. The night advances ; I am cold ; I am cold at heart especially. I strive to rise ; I fall back. I warm myself an instant in those holy rays which Heaven graciously sends me, and then returns the chilling reality, penetrating, and enveloping body and soul. A degree of remorse seizes me in the thought of not having sufficiently enjoyed thee, in not having sufficiently blessed God for the joy thou hast been to me. It almost seems to me that had I been more thankful I might have reclaimed thy life, or more loving, I might have detained thee as by force with us. Folly, I know, and even culpable folly, for it borders on revolt ; but how can I hinder these thoughts coming into and harassing the mind ? I can only humble myself in my trouble, and ask God's help against the temptations of sorrow.

Again adieu, for to-day, my child . . .
Adieu . . .

Sunday Morning, seven o'clock.

AND I returned to my room, but I had not finished with these temptations. I took my Bible; I tried to read. Impossible. The eyes read; the mind and heart were elsewhere.

It was moreover at a place where the Bible opened of itself, as some one has said, under the hand of one needing consolation—it was at the last chapters of St. John. I found all the texts that the afflicted turn over and over again, as the miser his gold.

I persevered; at length I became the better for my reading; and I succeeded at last in becoming completely calm. I had begun at the fourteenth chapter, arriving at the seventeenth. Another painful struggle arose. I remembered reading this chapter on one of the calmest days of my life. Soon this association absorbed me; the mourner of to-day looked back to the happiness of the past; the consolatory chapter suggested but a melancholy contrast.

I turned to the eleventh chapter, Jesus raising Lazarus. In this chapter there are details, and words, which nothing can resist. "I am the resurrection and the life." *I am!* He does not promise; it is He himself whom he announces.

The resurrection and the life are there, present, incarnate, before the tomb of Lazarus ; it is the resurrection, the life, which the two sisters behold as they look upon Jesus.

Already had I blessed God for having reconquered me by this view. But I counted too much upon myself, and the end of the narrative brought back again the bitterness,—Lazarus was given back again to his loving ones. My daughter will never be given back to me.

A word, notwithstanding, remained with me, the most human of the divine page, and this word, in restoring my comfort, helped me to receive the whole. "Jesus," says the evangelist, "*wept.*" He who was about, by a simple act of his sovereign will, to bring back Lazarus to the light of day, yielded himself to all those impressions which have no power with death ; he *groaned in the spirit, and was troubled ; he wept.* Then I may weep ; I cannot listen to those who insist solely on the glorious, joyful point of view in the departure of our beloved friends. Does not the word stand there to reassure us of the legitimacy of tears ?

I see it stand there, also, as a promise, of pardon to those who may have too humanly trembled, too humanly wept. "Jesus wept," and yet

he was about to find Lazarus again, and he knew it, and to do this he would have but the word to speak. To us, our separations in comparison with eternity are short, very short : but they are long as regards earth, irrevocable, *eternal*, as we say. O Saviour, Lord, be not thou angry with us, if at times our hearts fail us before such an abyss, and if thy word even is sometimes powerless to raise us ! Thus I strove to conquer my weakness. But I dared not pray, for I feared that I should not succeed ; it was the sick one who hesitates about trying the new remedy, fearing to prove that, although he believes it to be good, it may have no power upon him. God helped me, however ; I took courage. It was that kind of prayer which does not formalize itself, wherein one humbly throws one's self at the feet of Him who knoweth all our needs. My thoughts fell successively on all mine ; then again I experienced a painful shock, when my lips were about to utter the name which I must henceforward omit.

But God did not permit the sacred image thus evoked at this moment to bring back too much anguish. It seemed to me that I was beginning to be reconciled to the idea that one of my children had left the paternal roof, to be sheltered

under the care of a better father than myself and with this thought I was enabled to close my eyes.

When I reopened them, it was day. The night although so short, had left the impression of an interminable struggle between fatigue and that state which is neither sleeping nor waking, neither dream nor real life, a strange intermingling of both. The blow which God had permitted yesterday, had often fallen upon the father's heart and imagination, in dreams of the night even in the time of full possession. You have experienced this, fathers and mothers, doubtless. What joy then on the awakening! As one shakes the weight off the chest so to chase away these dismal shadows which envelop the soul. Thus had I done more than once during the night in my dreams, again and again chasing away the anguish, finding myself again surrounded by all my beloved ones. Alas! it was the awakening which was the dream, the illusion: the sorrow which remained true, real. But these imaginary awakenings, these alternations of joy and grief, were, nevertheless, of some value to me. That which I had dreaded so much, the awakening, the true awakening in the morning, was the less rude; I had served my ap

prenticeship in dreams, and the shock by repetition moderated. I found myself, in consequence, less agitated in presence of the inexorable reality ; I again took up my burden without finding it too heavy, and this was gain assuredly. Then a friend came to my aid. The godfather of Madeleine had transferred to her some of the affection he had borne to a son long since wept.

The two children are now reunited. Is it not said, that the dead attract the dead, and that mysterious link, established by our love between two beings, condemns them to depart together or to follow each other? the

It is but a year, almost day for day, that the other child was called away, the recollection of whom has never quitted me since yesterday. Daughters of two sisters, born the same month, Margaret and Madeleine, they were baptized together. Sweet *fête!* solemn day! Still I seem to see the windows of the old church, glittering under the radiant sunshine of June, the two families grouped together in the vast nave tinged with the purple and azure rays of light streaming over them. Silence all around, for but few were there ; it was not the hour for service ; but the silence and solitude even of these vaulted aisles seemed, as it were, to add their interest to

the solemn rite, as though the joy of our sufficed to fill and yield fragrance to the s
But then, whenever are these aisles dese
On what day or hour can we enter the an
church of St. Peter at Geneva, and not find
peopled with grand recollections of noble
heroic Christians? Here was raised, firm
lofty, the candlestick lighted with the evang
Word; here came on pilgrimage, as to the
yes modern times, all those who thirsted
hear and liberty; here have prayed, have
even found again in God, country and good t
exp^{er}ie kingdom, those who had been compell
lest their country and goods for the sake c
gospel; here thousands have found streng
go forth anew as soldiers of Christ to meet a
tism of blood. And it seemed to me that I
see all these generations present at our pe
baptism. The grand old cathedral seemed
for us, for our two little angels, smiling, lo
blooming babes. And the man who from
vin's pulpit pronounced the church's benedi
the man who immediately afterwards, a
foot of that pulpit, sprinkled the typical w
on the forehead of these two infants,—was
of the two fathers; it was myself. Now
are in a nobler temple, both these infants v

we then presented to God. They have found again, not as a *souvenir* which can be evoked, but living crowned with eternal glory, those generations of Christians which I, in imagination, raised again, around their baptism. We inscribed them on that day, in the visible church; God hath done that which we could only do as in a figure: He hath received them into that ^{out a} church, the invisible, the holy the immor-

reen
ether

Nine o'clock.

21- I HAVE seen her again. Filled with the thoughts of eternity, I had some fear lest the ages of death might have already made some change which would bring me back to the realities of the tomb. But no. It is my angel of yesterday, still more beautiful, if it be possible.

I could only stay a few moments; it was necessary to write to several friends. Many, had not even heard of the illness, or the cause of alarm; they still believed me the happy father they had met but three days ago. And shall I find many among these who have not passed through a similar trial? I have never yet made the calculation; henceforth I shall have more consideration.

For the rest, I experience a sort of pleasure—strange word, here, but I know of no better—in trying to make them understand that they have no longer this advantage over me. And will not this pleasure consist in my becoming the object of their sympathy? No; there is another reason and a more christian one, and the principal one to me I hope. Whoever has not passed through some trial is an incompetent being, and he feels he is so; he will feel it at any rate, after passing through affliction, that he was so, and that he will never again be so. Then, every affliction has its own work to do in our souls; had you understood all things, save but one, then had this last one something to work in you. Can a father be complete as a father in the sight of God, or a mother, even a mother, as completely a christian as much as a mother, if she never had a child to mourn for? To be a father, or a mother may be a blessing, but it is of no christian value unless it may have advanced the education of our souls, and our preparation for heaven. Believe you that soul-education can be complete in those who have only possessed, who have never been called to give up their possessions? I know a father whom God hath still left *in possession* of all his children, who, in speaking

of a friend bereaved as myself, said : " It is him, perhaps, whom God hath enriched, and perhaps it is me whom He hath impoverished." He spoke the truth ; the Father, spared the loss of his children, remained rich with his flourishing family, but poor perhaps, in resignation and faith ; the afflicted father is enriched by the blessed fruits of trial.

But these riches, Lord, who are they who ask them beforehand ? And if we had to choose between riches and poverty, thus understood, who would not ask for poverty ? . . . Alas ! I should have asked this like any other. Thou hast chosen for me. Thy choice is good, assuredly.

Ten o'clock.

IT is Sunday to-day. I remembered this on awaking ; the bells also remind me of it. The bells ! when we are joyful, they are joyful ; when we mourn, they are mournful. The Cathedral sends me to-day its *sympathetic* wailings, as it enveloped me on that other day with its silent joy. Such is life. These sounds which reach me so mournfully, so solemnly, come joyously to others.

Mournful, or otherwise, it is to-day the voice

of the church, the call to worship! How I should like to go and take my accustomed place in the temple! But my presence would astonish. It might be thought an ostentation of resignation, of zeal, and I ought to avoid such an appearance.


The more I advance in life the less I understand those who never respond to this call. In happy days, to take our joys to the temple; in days of sadness, our griefs; on ordinary days, as there are such for all, there to go to find again thoughts of living interest, perpetual, eternal. I know that these thoughts are confined to no particular place; but where can they be better sought than in the house of God, in the whole assembly together, each one for himself, all seeking the same treasure, and each able to appropriate it wholly to himself? Do any say that one can pray everywhere? This is true; but those who proclaim this the loudest are those who pray nowhere. There once was a time when if a place became vacant in the temple, a place in the cemetery had just become filled. And for a long time, also, the temple was the place chosen above all others for the last resting-place, and although bordering on a false idea such a desire may have been, still there was veneration in this fidelity to the holy

courts. Chime bells, chime, chime on! ye are no longer the solely call, ye are the protestation of the church against those who hear ye no more, and once ceasing to hear ye, it is as if all concern, all pleasure, consent to this silence.

One would be happy without God, suffer without God, live and die without God. . . .

To die! yes; one sometimes even succeeds in this. But to see one's own die and be happy, ah! this is more difficult.

I have been told of a man who was never seen in a church, and who boasted of this. His only child fell ill, and in a short time was at the point of death. The Pastor visited him; accustomed to read the human heart, he understood by the man's tone, although he neither spoke of the illness, or of the child, that a deep movement had taken place within him. He looked at him fixedly, saying to him: "You have prayed!" The man was at first silent, then murmured something; at length with an immense effort and in a trembling voice, said, "Ah, well, yes, I have prayed." It is probable that he had not known how to ask for more than that his child might be spared to him, and I know not if this first prayer inaugurated any change in his soul; but he had prayed, earnestly prayed, and per-



haps it might have been that he had done that by the death-bed of his son which he would have never done on his own death-bed. But let us not be too hasty in condemning this or that prayer. God alone is the judge of this. There might be pride in our judgment. Ah! poor father! Between his prayer and my prayers, which I may be tempted to think better, the distance is probably less than between my prayers and true prayer, that which lays aside all calculation, and trusts entirely in God. Ah! who can completely divest himself from some calculation, some dependence on those prayers he may have striven to render as pure and as christian as possible? Even at the very moment when one may be saying: "Thy will be done!"—one may make a merit of it in the heart, and the more one believes himself to have said it in all sincerity, the more he may believe he has a right to expect that this very sincerity may have for its reward the favor implored. One would indeed offer his child to God, but it is in order that God may touch the offering, and refuse to accept it; one leads the victim to Mount Moriah, as did Abraham, and while preparing the altar, one is expecting the angel to come to prevent *the sacrifice*. One will, indeed, take the cup, but

it is that God may take out of our hands. Was it thus, that thou prayedst, O Jesus, the day when thou criedst : " Father, if it be possible ?" Thou didst not calculate. Thou stretchedst out thy hand in real earnest to take the bloody cup ; thou didst not put thy will in the place of that will which thou saidst thou wouldst accept be it what it might. O afflicted ones, my brethren ! perhaps I take away from you, as I take away from myself, the illusions which are so pleasing to us. We have believed ourselves to be submissive, when we were not ; we have thought we prayed, and we have had so much of human confidence in our prayers that it has turned them into a sort of calculation. But listen : there is one prayer which we can always offer without any reservation, and which ought to precede all others : " Lord, teach us to pray." This is that prayer which the disciples one day addressed to Jesus ; and it is that which we ought every day to offer up to Him. There is no true prayer but that which God inspires ; there is none worthy of Him but that which comes from Him.

He alone then will teach us to use, in their true sense, those words in the prayer which He taught his disciples on that occasion : " Thy will

be done on earth as it is in heaven." In heaven there is no resistance either open or hidden ; in heaven there is a perpetual immolation of the entire will to the supreme will. There, it is true, there is no painful sacrifice to be made, no Isaac to ask back again. There submission is easy, for all is happiness. Ah ! it is this happiness which I ought to ask God to permit me to taste, even here below, even in the midst of trial. I know that I should not ask the impossible. I know that christians have realized this, that is to say, God hath wrought it in them. I know that with a riven heart they are enabled to will sincerely, fully, that which God wills, or shall will, and to find in this self-abdication a foretaste of the life of heaven.—Lord, Lord, teach us to pray.

Noon.

SEVERAL friends have called to see us since the service. A house of mourning, is it not a temple also ? I have led them all into our little sanctuary. One I perceived had entered without me. The little folded hands clasped a bouquet of violets, the only flowers of the season, others were strewn over the child, as if it had *rained violets* on this little couch of death.

The surprise was both sweet and painful to me. These humble flowers scattered her were like the tears of spring over some tender plant torn up to wither and die. The autumn, with its falling leaves, seems destined to announce death to every thing that can die ; the spring seems as if it ought to save all that can live ; and, when it is condemned to witness death, we seem to feel it weeping with us. I have more than once meditated, as it were interrogatively, on the continuation of the life of those dear to me. When November has sent me back again to the town, my last look on my trees has always been to ask them who will be here when they bloom again.

She loved flowers ; it was not as a child does, generally, loving them all, seeking from all, indiscriminately, but the passing amusement of an instant. She desired the finest. I had cultivated this growing taste in her, as it seemed to me a prelude of the love of the beautiful in all things, of the true, by consequence, in the things of intelligence, and of the good in those of the heart. Still I seem to see her contemplating a rose, as on one day in the last autumn ; it was a rose which she had asked me to gather for her. As she held it in her hand, her countenance

changed to a seriousness which was very striking to me. She appeared to be seeking the clue to some mystery ; why the rose was so beautiful and who had made it so, and what this beauty might reveal.

How many such questions had crossed her little mind I had never thought of as yet ; but I said to myself, on observing such serious attention, that love already so decided for the beautiful works of the Great Workman, of whom she was still ignorant, would soon aid the education of her soul. As soon as she might be able to seize the idea of a God, she would perceive Him in every thing, everywhere recognise Him in his goodness and in his glory, which the simple flower reveals as much as the orbs of heaven, to those who can search into and understand this. The lily, more glorious than Solomon, will discover that Providence who can clothe with magnificence the humblest. The rose, fresh and blooming, will teach a thankful admiration ; withered, the nothingness and vanity of all things. Thus would be opened to her the pleasing and serious book of nature, which leads to the book of God.

This book which I should have rejoiced in spelling out with her, God hath closed for ever on earth, to unfold it to her elsewhere, more

glorious and more clearly, doubtless. She could now teach me to read it; she could reveal to me, both in nature and grace, the things of which I scarcely know the first word here below any more than the youngest child. She has no more need of my flowers; she can gather all others in the garden of God. There every tree is the tree of knowledge, true divine knowledge, expanding indefinitely the faculties of those thirsting to pluck the living fruit. There God will continue to reveal himself in nature, but in nature illuminated by the immediate rays of his glory and fertilized at the very source of his love. There we shall see him in his works as in his essence; that God whom we at one time call the God of nature, at another, the God of grace. There, as a Christian thinker has lately said, "nature will be grace, and grace will be nature; or rather beyond the sphere of sin which has intercepted the unique ray of eternal love, grace, and nature, in their supreme unity, will receive a new name, which is not given to any to pronounce here below." It is there then, to the bosom of that nature inconceivable to our grosser conceptions, that I see the child transported. And, nevertheless, "O wretched man that I am!" one of the most painful thoughts which has

moved my soul the most keenly is, that the Spring will return, and she will not be here to meet it with her smile. The trees which have witnessed her playful gambols under their shade will know her no more ; the buds which she saw beginning to develop themselves last year she will not see open ; the soft air which giveth life and heat to all things, will leave her in the cold night of the tombs : ah ! these are images of which one cannot rid oneself. She has no need of my flowers, no, not any ; but every flower will rise and ask me : " Where is she ? " and I must reply to each flower, I must reply to myself, for certainly it will occur to me, on the return of the flowers, to find myself astonished with them that the most loved one is not here. Thus rule alternately the two hearts, the two men. The Christian's eyes are raised above and he seeks the child among the angels ; the father seeks her below, and it may be long that he will seek her here. Does God demand that the heart of the Christian should entirely absorb the heart of the father ? Hath he not created both ?

And this is why these violets strewn over the white robe, clasped in the little folded hands, have appeared to me so sweet and so sad.

Three o'clock.

OTHER friends have called. There were among the number some with whom I am far from being at one, and, nevertheless, these are not those which have done me the least good to-day. Has it been on their side or mine that the most steps towards Christian sympathy have been taken? The earnestness I believe has been equal, or, to speak better, God hath brought us together in a higher atmosphere where every word is hushed which is not love or peace. Why then do we so often forget that every other is a vitiated atmosphere, fatal? Why should we wait until an opened grave recalls us to the vanity of so much contention? Is it not always open? death but a little nearer or a little farther off?

If I have received visits, I have also paid them; is it necessary to say to whom? Every moment that I could dispose of I have given to her. Alone with her, several times, I surprised myself by speaking to her not simply the words of regret and tenderness. No: I spoke earnestly, gently, continuously, as I should have spoken to her could she have heard, or rather, as not yet for a long time I should have spoken to her. She advanced

in age and became transformed to me as a hour fled. I had need to seek again on each sit the child ; there is, as it were, other eyes me which persist in seeing more than the child more even than the child has ever been in world. Hence these endless conversations when I fearlessly mingled the past, the future thousand impressions, a thousand questions if I should be so much the better understood more I soared above the lowly capacity of a child.

I had already gone over all her little history happy to tell her again and again, and to see better understand, how much she was loved, how much happiness she had brought to us. strove to sound with her the depth of the mystery of family love and union, the heart enlarged itself with every fresh object of affection. Though it may seem complete, and though may well be so, still the newly-born will hold its place, and what a place! before he arrived there was no void, but, after him, a void immense ?

I also enquired what in God's plan is the part assigned to this love. It may remain like other love, entirely earthly ; it may also refer to us the divine love. That which I felt toward *her is the same love which the Supreme Father*

in the measure of his immensity, feels for me, that which she owed to me in return, is the same which I owe to God, multiplied by the immensity of his grace. The union which was established by blood between her and me, the depth of which never appeared so fully as since the bereavement of yesterday, is the feeble but true image of the indissoluble bond which unites me to the Father of spirits. From thence I interrogated her on other mysteries, replying to myself, or pursuing them as if she had answered me. This bond which death had so painfully snapped asunder did it consist solely in blood and affection?

Is there not, between souls, a bond still more intimate, a spiritual, immortal relationship? I have need to believe this, in order not to alarm myself with the thought that I may, more or less, forget with the lapse of time this child which has been taken from me. This thought to-day more than alarms me; it tempts me to rebel; and I can understand all the depth of meaning of that biblical passage, Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. I, also, in this sense, although I am but the father, will not be comforted; and when one would with a touch take away all my sorrow, I would ask to keep it all as a sacred heritage. But, after

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I, my daughter, I know well I shall not prove an exception to the common law, which is, that sorrow should diminish, and that even Rachel should weep less ; I know that the time will come, should I live, when thou wilt be to me no more than a distant *souvenir*, precious still, but more or less effaced. This is what alarms me to-day, nay, more, irritates me : this is why I have need of thinking that oblivion even, (and God forbid that it should ever go so far as oblivion,) shall not break the bond of union between thee and me. I would that this spiritual, immortal relationship should guarantee to me thy love to any moment when it may please God to call me, and mine to thee, that thou mayst be to me then, all that thou wast to me in life.

Six o'clock

AND now, after the history of the last 1 years, let me endeavor to review that yesterday. Every hour, every half-hour br back to me, with a cruel fidelity, all the de and emotions of the corresponding hour ; it be said to be a series of pictures rising in to place themselves in spite of myself before *under my view*. In spite of myself? no ;

they not to come I should call them up. I would only say there needs no effort to recall them.

Six o'clock! It was about this time that the last hope faded away, that art confessed itself vanquished, and nothing remained to us but to watch the agony of death, praying to God to mercifully mitigate it.

Did I ask Him to shorten it? In truth I know not. Two sentiments were again at strife within me, and continued their struggle to the end. God heard our first prayer; the departure was calm, the suffering became lessened, evidently, perhaps null. Impossible, nevertheless, not to desire to see the end; but impossible, also, not to say to ourselves: "We still have our child, and presently we shall have her no longer." Alas! this is what I shall say the day after tomorrow, when I must separate myself from that which is no longer the child, but her perishable remains. How was it that I did not say this when it was herself truly, truly herself? and then, instead of hastening the end, I seemed to enjoy with a degree of happiness those moments which were still accorded to me. It will be sweet to me, I thought, to have lost nothing. Rest thee, child, rest! How couldst thou be too

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such loved even for an instant? I must let thee go, never to see thee any more.

I have, as it were, laid up a last provision of *souvenirs*. Her look, the sound of her voice will dwell the better in my memory; I shall be able to see her the longer as she used to be, even as in the days of health, of joy. And as to those recollections which remain of her dying moments, they will also have their sweetness. Is it nothing to have been able to lengthen out a peaceful adieu? We love to accompany a traveller a little way on his journey. It seems as if the separation were made thus by degrees, and, indeed, when the parting moment comes although the apprehension has increased, the separation has become rather the less trying. The dying hours which we have followed, step by step, is as it were, the first stage on the journey in the departure of our beloved ones. De itself the final adieu. A last word to pronounce a last drop at the bottom of the bitter cup taste.

As this moment approached, at one time eyes brightened as the spark revives when about to expire; at another it was apparently extinguished, and each time one could believe *veil fixed*; I understood, or rather I divine

it was. No more gleams of intelligence ; not another glance to watch. Leaning over her, an irresistible attraction caused me to watch still more closely for the last movement, and the very last sign of life. Thus I found my lips resting on her forehead. A few sighs made themselves heard, and then the immobility made me understand that all was over. How can I describe what I felt during those last minutes? It was the adieu, amidst a flood of diverse ideas—revolt, submission, bitter regret, then regret softened. God hath permitted that this last should prevail. Before this door opened to her, God hath permitted one of the rays from beyond to descend into my heart. I no longer feel that I have the right, or even the wish, to detain the child still here in our darkness when God hath opened to her the gates of heaven. I led her, as it were, by the hand to the threshold, and I have given her into the hands of her true Father.

Go, then, dear child, go, He will love thee. He has loved thee better than I, better, better than thy mother, that Father to whom we consign thee. The angels who are to be thy companions will love thee better than thy brother, better than thy sisters. They desire to have thee amongst them. They will raise their highest

song of welcome ; they will lead thee amidst the wonders of heaven. Depart, my child, depart ! my white dove take thy flight ! . . .

Yes, take thy flight ! we can bless thy departure as we blessed thy coming to us. If the day on which thou enteredst this valley of tears, to wound thy feet with the thorns and pebbles of the way, was a day of rejoicing, is it not a day of joy, also, when God taketh thee away from the evil and the sorrow of this place of weeping ? He crowneth thee before the combat, and the bitter cup which must ere long have been pressed to thy lips He hath removed for ever.

Depart then ! God wills it ! . . . Ah ! we had in store for thee a rich treasure of affection, and the world promised thee all that it could give of pure joys and happy days. We had made the pleasant family nest very soft for thee. It is but a few days ago that I saw thy little brother of four years and a half approach thee take thy hand, kiss it, and contemplate thee in silence, and thou art gone from us. But God grant that we may not regret for thee these good things of a day, these poor joys, when God calls thee to His own. To us, every joy is transitory, the springtime fadeth away ; to thee, there is now an eternal spring, neverfailing joys. To

ly, earthly affections, unquiet, perplexing ; to see, in His luminous plenitude, divine, eternal love. Thou hast chosen the better part, we will not recall thee to share our misery. Take thy everlasting flight, my white dove !

Eleven o'clock

THUS have I reaccompanied her this evening to the threshold of eternity. I found again all my impressions ; I lived over again the past twenty-four hours.

And now that these twenty-four hours have passed, I have lived a day without her ; a whole day's apprenticeship of what my life will be without her. Where am I in comparison with yesterday evening ? ought I to be satisfied, before God, with this first day ?

Thanks to Him I can be so ; not that I imagine myself to have made much progress ; and, besides, I may fall back. I shall fall back probably ; but I have made more than I hoped to have made. I have less fear of the sequel ; less fear, not of the void, for it seems the rather to have increased, but of myself and of my weakness. I am resigned in some measure ; and this is also a step gained to find the effect, although it be lit-

tle by little, of the succor from above. To ask to be reëstablished all at once may be faith doubtless, but it also savors of impatience ; God could work a miracle, but we have no right to require that he should do so. Then, unless it were a fresh miracle there must be time for this, in order that the true end may be attained. It is not in twenty-fours that one can reap all the fruits of a trial ; those even that one may have already gathered have still need of ripening. For myself I do not know that I ought yet to speak of fruit. It seems the rather the earlier season of preparing the soil, where the seed is to fall, the more surely to make it take deep root. Alas ! even this labor may prove to be in vain. Often have I seen the soil harden quickly under affliction, and the good seed perish as heretofore. God forbid that this should be my case. He will give the fruits. He knows how much I have need of them ; He knows how much I have need to speak of them from experience. One benefit has already accrued to me. It is well in being called to minister to those under trial not to appear to such as the happy man, speaking at his ease of those things which he has never experienced or known. I shall never again speak *thus*, my *brethren*, believe me ; I shall know better, much

better. Henceforth I shall have the right of speaking to you of the fruits of trial, as I have since yesterday that of the burial itself. These are two things quite distinct, and I ought to take care not to confound them. Trials have their dangers. Pride, the foremost: we may even be proud in being able to call ourselves afflicted. There is a sort of pagan austerity in some persons who like to appear at the mercy of affliction, with fate as they say. That this kind of pride, or *austere virtue*, may not have produced great courage, under great reverses, it cannot be denied; it is certain also that it may have given strength, great strength, under every species of trial; but nothing really good can come from pride. Such strength is not christian strength. Most frequently, too, it does pretend to be so, glorifying itself on the contrary as having nothing to do with the Gospel; but it sometimes, nevertheless, believes it has, and here is the great danger. Instead of seeking strength in God, it is sought for in man, in the desire to attract their attention by showing oneself strong and resigned; an evil way. It is not here where the true fruits of trial are to be reaped. They ripen not in the false sun of human glory; they must have the true beams of the Sun of Righte-

ousness, and the breath of the Holy Spirit bring them to perfection.

Let us then take up our cross, but let us endeavor to bear it, as Jesus commands, in following Him: without Him, even in bearing it, we may but wander out of the way. Have I followed Him, truly followed Him during this first day?—I would hope so. These questions, even, which I address to myself, at this moment, it is only He Himself who can have taught me to ask them.

Monday Morning, eight o'clock.

ONE is almost surprised at being able to sleep, and even peacefully sleep; when I saw our beloved dead again this morning, I was almost ready to ask pardon of her for having been able to forget her for so many hours. But the day had been long and fatiguing. I find myself a little better for the repose, and prepared for this day which will be long also, and which I much dread.

Yes, long, very long; and yet I do not desire to see the end. Another weakness, which I do not even attempt to combat; it seems that I may *accord this to nature.* And what is this weak-

ness? It is that I love and even taste delight myself in this little lifeless body, and that I dread still more than yesterday the hour when I must part with it forever.

But still if I yield to this impression without scruple, it is not that I do not feel that it may be an obstacle to others, more elevated, more Christian. I have already said how much this face, ennobled by death, renders present, visible, the holy thoughts reflected there. But it is not only the face which speaks to me. These dear remains tell me of the vanity of our earthly hopes, even the most legitimate, even the holiest. They exhort me to build elsewhere than on the sands of time, the sport of wind and waves. They bring before my face the moment when we shall be, we also, but inanimate flesh, we also, to whom the privilege of a longer life will but serve to charge us before God with a heavy load of responsibility. But if by these reflections death become more terrible in prospect, does it not at the same time also appear serene and amiable? Under what more pleasing image could I behold death than that of this little sleeping angel strewed with flowers? "The king of terrors" hath put off his sombre aspect; he is no more than a lovely child who seems to be saying

to you : " Come, come away, the passage is short and easy, and it is so pleasant to be where I am." Then comes to me the remembrance of our Lord's words : " The kingdom of Heaven is of such as these." One longs for this resemblance, one is led to ask it of the Lord. To become in His sight as a little child, is not this one of the phases of that new birth which is wrought in us by His grace? " Suffer," said Jesus, " suffer the little children to come unto me." Yea, Lord, let her go to Thee ; and may her departure at least teach me what I ought to be, that mine may be as blessed, and that my brother may be able to say of me : " Let him go to his Saviour !"

Thus blend and brighten each other the simplest and the highest views of faith by the side of this funereal cradle—death cradle ! cradle of death.

Nine o'clock.

AND now, alas ! come the humiliating realities of our humanity, its melancholy and cruelly terrestrial details. The " inspector of the dead " is come to pay his visit. He *permits* us—it is the ordinary formulary—to render to-morrow to *dust that which belongs to dust*. He is charged

register the age, the disease, etc. The world's statistics wait to make up their accounts, to arrange their statements. The death which is to leave you such an immense void, that the world almost appears a desert, is but a unit in the figures of science, and this unit, so much deplored, may perhaps provoke the smile of satisfaction with him who has need of it to make up a calculation or confirm some theory.

Now, also, has arrived the agent of funereal pomp, disguising at his best the indifference with which he looks on so much sorrow, and so many wars, everywhere the same. To him also it is but a unit; one thing only interests him, it is whether the unit be little or great, light or heavy, and then what charge shall be made.

Another administrator of these offices remarked to me: "The mortality has been less of late in the greater bodies than in the smaller." Thus to such we are but bodies which come and go, eat and drink, to the day when "mortality" arranges its statistics. But still, after all, we are all accomplices in this indifference; a little more or a little less verbally crude, that is all.

A death which touches not us remotely or near, the circumstances attending it must have been very striking in order to move us even but

slightly, or again oftentimes it will not move us in the least, unless by some return upon ourselves, or to some of our present or past sorrows, or some event to which the future may seem to have in store for us. Beyond this, a human being which expires, a leaf which falls, it is the same thing, and if we have any sensibility to dispose of, it would be rather in favor of the leaf. Then with regard to the more remarkable deaths; even in those losses in which we have taken a deep and real interest, how long do we bear them in mind? And if I ask myself what I have done in any of these cases, how long may I hope that a friend, one of those even in whom I may have found at this time the most Christian sympathy, will seriously occupy himself with my sorrow?

To wish this were otherwise would be *ego-*tism. The river of life rushes on unceasingly, carrying down one and another, our eyes become weary in long following each victim, a glance at most and that is all that we can give, when it does not immediately concern ourselves. *But*, nevertheless, if this thought comes with bitterness to the bereaved, if it be heartrending to think that the being so much wept over is *definitively* but a unit in a calculation, one body in

a cemetery, the remembrance of but a few days, even with those who have wept with us,—how rejoicingly one turns to that other thought, that there is One elsewhere whose pity never abates, whose love knows no forgetfulness! Thus returns, under a new form, all that there is of the grandest and the most consolatory in the Gospel. This poor unit which will be lost amidst the millions of others, the work of Christ hath been extended to it, hath taken hold of it, as though it had been the only one in the world. That which men have called a body, Jesus hath called a soul, and He hath said that a soul is worth more than the whole world, and He hath done more than say this, for He hath written it with his own blood, and we know that this price, paid for all, is also paid for each one. Each one can say *my* Saviour, each one in heaven will find *his* Saviour, his own Saviour, his entirely, the friend, the brother, the divine spouse. Oh! how earthly, deplorably earthly, is the sentiment of pity for our deceased friends, because the world forgets, or will have forgotten them so soon! When I am left alone in my recollections of thee, my daughter, here below, I know who will bear thee on his heart better than I can in mine; and when I must needs forget thee,

will never lose sight of thee. Art thou not with Him? and hast thou not everything in Him?

And it is not only in regard to our departed that this assurance is consoling, for it is not of them alone that we think when we speak of the oblivion which awaits them. It is that we pity ourselves in them, or at any rate with them. "What then will remain of me?" The void which I shall leave, how long will it take to fill it up? If I were to return at the end of two years, of one year, of a month, should I find many persons glad to see me again? There is often great bitterness in this thought. O ye of little faith, look above? Ask not of the earth that which it cannot give, even when it loves most. Look at that other love which can, and will give all things. What matter if on earth you are to be forgotten, and become as nothing, if in heaven you are to be one of those priests, one of those kings whom Jesus shall make to reign with Him for ever and ever. In the vision of the Apostle St. John listen to their songs of happiness and glory. How they look down from above on human glory. How they pity those who bear the title of king or of emperor, who may, it is true, live in the annals of mankind *and yet may be worse than nothing and forgot*

en if they live and reign not above! And ye, who even while living have neither name nor place, who will have none to forget you, since you have none to love you, it is perhaps more easy to you to think of that Heavenly friend, and to place yourselves entirely in His hand. If the earth from its sadness is to you already a living tomb, He can light it up as He can the grave with a celestial brightness, and the neglect of your fellow creatures will but unite you the closer to Him who will never leave nor forsake you.

Two o'clock.

BUT I should be ungrateful if I were to dwell to-day upon the ideas of human forgetfulness, and abandonment of human nature. On all sides I receive only tokens of sympathy, visits, kind words, letters, and for her, flowers, choice flowers, wreaths, and bouquets. . . . But nothing can rival the bouquet of violets, already faded in her little hands. They shall remain till the hour of separation, and shall then be kept as one of our relics.

I would wish to remember all that has been said to me, so deeply touching, sympathizing and Christian during these two days; it would be

a treasure to me and to those who may read these pages. But I believe I should try in vain. I find ideas are always much the same, necessarily ; and I feel that I could not clothe them with that vividness which the diversity of character, or, still more, the diversity of trial that each may have passed through gives.

I can but again admire how the Gospel incarnates itself, so to say, in each Christian, transforming him, without taking away his identity, speaking by his mouth, and still letting him speak. Hence the fecundity of those ideas, where the divine and human element blend with each other, as the divinity and humanity of Jesus, producing that astonishing variety, all reproducing some of those intimate chords in unison and sympathetic adaptation when they present themselves to the afflicted for his consolation under any phase of suffering. In music it is difficult to conceive how such diversity of melody, so much scientific harmony, can be born of so few notes.

The Christian *notes* are also few ; yet, nevertheless, they have sufficed for ages for millions of souls to chant in unison, in joy, in sorrow, by the cradle, and in the presence of the tomb, *vibrating* from one soul to the other, responding

continually in the same harmony through infinite variations, and rising in concord as earth's perpetual psalm to Him who hath redeemed us by his blood.

Such is the hymn which God hath permitted me to hear, but which I cannot attempt to express in these cold lines.

But this is also the hymn of Heaven and earth, and we have only to bend the ear a little more attentively to hear it, distantly it may be, but still better than here below. There, in the eternal abodes, our beloved dead are chanting it, and we cannot think of them, speak of them, but they respond to us, in some sort, in accents of love and thankfulness, which the truth better understood, and consolations henceforth full, perfect, unchangeable, inspire.

There the young child, as well as the aged Christian long ripened for Heaven, reveal to us the inexhaustible richness of divine thought fertilizing the human. Yea, Lord, thou hast ordained to thyself praise out of the mouths of very babes and sucklings, as the Psalmist says, and when they are closed in death they yet speak to those who will listen.

We will listen ; we will evoke with joy, although with tears, these thoughts which render

her present to us a humble child, as formerly, yet nevertheless the messenger of the Lord. We will look upon, without too much anguish, those touching little mementoes of her passage in the midst of us—clothes, playthings, every object touched or loved by her ; and by the side of the image of her pleasant face, that other sweet face shall appear to our recollection, the sacred gravity of which shall still the tumult of our hearts. Jesus will not say to us, as once he said to Jairus : “ She is not dead ; she is only sleeping.” He will say to us : “ She liveth ;” and we shall hear her say : “ Yes, I live ! But I live not that life which you would bring back to me ; I live that other life which you would have rejoiced in teaching me to seek. I have not sought it ; but I have found it.” . . . And her view, fixed on the Prince of life, will again and again tell us, more eloquently than the most pious or learned doctors of earth, that “ He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life.”

Yes, he *hath* it ; and it would be but a poor way of understanding the Gospel to give this name, *eternal life*, solely to that which follows death. This word in Scripture does not signify duration, but a principle ; this is the vital force *of a Christian*, as much as it is a Christian truth,

the immediate fruit of that new birth, uniting the soul to the Saviour, and creating it for Heaven. But this divine life, which so much misery here below labors to stifle, who can better teach us how to live it than those who already live it solely, fully, in the bosom of the Saviour? We behold not their faces, hear not their voices; but we have established between us that mysterious communion which needeth not words, and by which the thoughts of heaven are better understood. And this is not the ideal which I am tracing, a dream of sorrow and imagination. I do not believe that any Christian who has lived much in thought with a beloved departed one, has done so without living more or less in those "heavenly places" where faith declares him to be. That which before was love, earthly love, the fragile intimacy of two beings brought together for a little while, is now the imperishable union of two souls, a union which reveals to you, you the living one, the exile, your full brotherhood with him who is already living in your common country. You feel that you will break this union if you give yourself up to earth, if you suffer to perish within you that principle of life which is common to both. All the love which you preserve for that soul you will devote

to that which shall keep it one with it, ~~that~~ which unites your nature to its true nature, ~~it~~ its true destination. Thus will be working in you ~~that~~ that which death hath wrought in that other one. Thus you will become sensible of that unity of eternal life, of which the two phases, the one on this side, the other on that side of the tomb, are but the unequal expansion of the same divine principle.

Let us, then, speak of our dead often, every day, that the thought of their invisible presence may render them still dearer.

Three o'clock.

IN such moments as those which I pass in review, the friends are not merely those who visit, or write to one. One has made others, even beyond the tomb, Christians who have been tried in the same way, touched with the same sorrows, and one asks how were they blessed to them.

I know a man who also lost a daughter, and this daughter was also called Madeleine. The man was called Luther.

Since yesterday I have thought much of Luther. Since yesterday, nay, rather since the day *before, even before* all hope was given up, I could

It chase from my thoughts a celebrated German engraving, viz., Luther by the death-bed of his daughter, the dead child crowned with roses ; and when my eyes opened to present realities, finding the other Madeleine living still, but promised to the grave, my heart trembled exceedingly. Then looking back on the past, I saw by this bed of death, this father with his manly face, kneeling, his eyes raised to Heaven, weeping, but praying. The burden heavy, but strength arriving has already come. Was he at first vanquished ? Perhaps so ; but he has risen victorious certainly. Then I remembered all the Christian words which he uttered during those days of mourning, which even his enemies themselves have gathered up with admiration. I see him near the dying bed pouring into the heart of his daughter that faith which filled his own. How he speaks to her of Jesus, of His cross, and of heaven ! How he strives to aid her in disengaging herself from the ties of earth, already weakened and loosened by the transports of the youthful soul going towards those regions which he had so often pointed out to her. Then, again, returns the man, the father, alarmed to see himself so well obeyed ; then, again, the strong Christian, the citizen of the heavenly country,

happy to enter therein by his daughter, while waiting to be received there himself. I hear the cry escape him a short time before the consummation of the sacrifice. Ah! I love her, I love her, how dearly I love her! . . . and, after this cry, the return to calmer thoughts and cooler words of courage and resignation. Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's! I seemed to be present with his friends as they witnessed this deep mysterious work which was taking place in his soul. The great theologian had made more steps towards his God in a few hours by this death-bed than he had made in years of meditation and combat.

Since yesterday, then, it is that I see, that I hear him by this dying child. It has been said, that the theologian, going beyond the Christian, was seized with an ardent desire to know more of the mysteries of dying than is permitted to us. It is said, that with his eyes fixed on the young girl, they were at times lighted up with a feverish curiosity, as if he had demanded, or waited a word, a sign, a ray from beyond the veil. That which is certain, is, that his writings bear traces here and there of this pre-occupation. He would know more of what Heaven is, what is *done there*, what is to be seen, and what is to be

experienced there. It is evident that he had need to restrain himself, not to desire to overpass the limit of that which is revealed to us, perhaps even not to murmur for having to rest there.

It would be impossible to entirely banish this curiosity ; every death at least brings it back. Of a friend who departs on a long journey, we love to know the first day, the second, the following days, if it can be, where he is, where we in idea may imagine him to be, and, if we do not know, our mind wanders over every spot, in spite of us, into every situation where it is likely he may be. Thus it is with the great departure, except that this grand journey of all is finished as soon as it begins. And while the traveler is still here, to be looked upon, absent we know well, yet present by his earthly remains, it seems that he ought to tell us that which we thirst so much to know.

I have experienced this sentiment, and I have also experienced another quite contrary to it. I should like to know more, and I like also the mystery which envelops death. It throws over life a sombre reflection, it is true, but it is, notwithstanding, a sublime one ; it keeps us upon earth, yet it invests the future world with all the

attractions of an unknown magnificence. This curiosity, which we may have repressed, and which, if otherwise, had discovered nothing, may be permitted to revive on the bed of death, in order to aid the flight of the soul towards the celestial regions. Yes, again, I should like an open door, allowing one to see beyond it, and like also that closed door, severe, inexorable which shall repulse me until the moment I pass beyond it forever. It is written that "we walk by faith, not by sight;" this is not merely the declaration of a fact, but it is the *resumé* of the Christian idea. To walk by faith, to live by faith, to live on faith, this is Christianity. Faith's part is so great and so grand that it seems to me it would have been lessened had it pleased God to have given us more light on the things of the other life. I like better that faith should be all on this side, and sight all beyond. I like better the total separation of the two worlds united only by our desires, our holy aspirations, our eagerness to seize on that eternal life which is common to both worlds. Even in the days of painful separation, there is more of true consolation, I am sure, in this firm and noble conception of the present economy than there would be in a clearer conception of that which is to come.

Besides, how could we have a clearer conception, if God had not first endowed us with another mind, which would not have been of this world? So dark are we that in presence of the few words in the Scriptures, which seem as though they ought to be to us a revelation about Heaven, we are like unto a blind man before a splendid painting, or as the deaf man near to the most harmonious music; and if we try to explain those words, we do but replace them by others, which in reality explain nothing. We are told we shall see God. *See God!* See the Invisible! In what way? With what eyes? Who knoweth? Who can know? Who would comprehend even were an angel or one of the dead were to come to tell us? An angel! It is written, there are things which "the angels desire to look into," and this desire which God leaves unfulfilled is doubtless one of the elements of their happiness. There is joy even in heaven in pursuing indefinitely the infinite.

And here I find myself brought back to what I said yesterday, that prayer may exist in Heaven; and I think I can prove another resemblance, a new link between the two worlds. I see not God, but I seek to know Him; the redeemed see Him, and still they also seek to know

Him. I see Him not ; and before this sublime word, *see* God, even the immensity of the mystery helps me to understand it a little. I leave the idea of seeing decidedly incomprehensible, here below ; I take that of the infinite, and my heart plunges therein with a happiness which is a foretaste of Heaven already. Yea, O my God, if by the slightest lifting only of the veil I am dazzled and transformed, what must there be beyond ? To know Thee as thou art, to love Thee as thou oughtest to be loved, Thou the sovereign good, and sovereign verity ; to lose myself in Thee, and still preserve my own existence ; so to be united to Thee, as never to fear to be ever separated ; so much at liberty as to have the happiness of giving myself to Thee every hour again and again ! To immerse myself in the endless satisfaction of all the holy desires I have ever amassed, of all Thou hast inspired in satisfying them ! To attain every moment to the summit of all my aspirations, again to aspire, again attain for ever and ever ! To adore at thy right hand Him who hath opened up to me this new world, to feel myself clothed with his righteousness, crowned with his glory, overflowing with gratitude eternally renewed, *like the joys* which He giveth me to partake

of! . . . Yes, all this, even in the depth of my misery, I can in some measure understand, and if this conception is not yet that of the joys of Heaven, certainly it lifts me above the earth and all that it hath ever given me.

And it is also one of the points of view which helps me the better to understand what those may be to me in the other world whom I have loved in this.

To partake of their joys, to make them partakers of mine, is not this, here, one of the purest and most fruitful sources of my happiness? As a child I could not play alone, could not admire alone; as a father I am happy when my children invite me to share in their pleasures and in their admiration? The object may be indeed small; but it increases by the sympathy excited by the part which it takes in the common happiness, and I have said what a rose can do. In the higher regions of poetry and art, I can enjoy alone, and enjoy much alone, but can I do this long? and for a continuance? No; the communion of minds, of hearts, the crown of all enjoyment is necessary to me. I cannot long remain the sole spectator, the sole possessor of the beautiful, the true, the great. *I must have that sympathy of souls which*

can seize on these things as I can, and with me, and while nothing can spoil this enjoyment more than an insufficient, nothing can heighten my enjoyment of these things more than a full, intelligent and ardent sympathy.

And now let us take a higher view. Instead of the beautiful, such as this life can offer, let us take it such as Heaven can give ; instead of the good, perfection ; instead of the great, the infinite. Then, to be able to taste, to possess ; instead of our unequal, distracted, fugitive aptitude for others' enjoyment, let us suppose intimate communion, unalterable sympathy, multiplying indefinitely our enjoyment with souls that shall render us happy in witnessing their happiness, happy in promoting their enjoyment of happiness.

No effort needed to reciprocate this happiness. That which one beholds or possesses, the other will behold and possess equally. That which I thought to point out will be shown to myself ; that which I thought to give will be at the same time given to me. Need I fear that this ineffable interchange may destroy variety and diversity between souls ? No ; each one will be himself, and will remain himself, for without this, what would become of the recollections in common, *the sacred links* of the past ? The unity will be

in happiness itself, in the common enjoyment, in the sweet perpetual assurance that not one particle of the happiness of any will be lost for those he loves. Thus shall we find again in Heaven the happiness of earth, purified by the Holy Spirit, heightened by the greatness of the objects, and yet remaining the same in its essential element—joy multiplied by holy affections, possession so many times complete as there will be cherished souls to lay hold on it with us.

Five o'clock.

HAVE I passed the bounds which I imposed on myself? Have I, as so many others have done, tried to pass over that which I have declared to be impassable? I know not; but it seems to me that for a moment I have breathed the air of the celestial country, and I feel that this moment can be often renewed. Nor are we completely exiled as we sometimes say we are. Heaven is not so far away; the earth is not so low. Faith and sight are two sisters. Nevertheless, even the very hour when I was meditating on these things, another thought entirely human, harassed my mind.

The second day is drawing to a close. To-

morrow before noon, *she* will no longer be here ; can I part with her without a likeness of her other than that imprinted on my memory ? Before these days, it is true, and while living, we had sought this from the skillful pencil of one who had known what it is to cradle a child in its coffin. But I desired more, such as that newer art alone can give, a portrait which would be herself, strictly herself.

Yesterday, this morning again, I repelled this idea. "Why desire a portrait of the dead?" I said. The other portrait, is it not better, such as she was, better also to us than which she is, since we know that she lives ? Then, almost suddenly, I took another view ; why not preserve all that is possible of her ? Why prevent myself from looking upon her, just as I have seen her during these two last days ?

Then I had but one fear : whether the sun had not too nearly set to permit of the operation. The artist was hastily sought, the attempt was successful, and I have what I desired.

Have I done right ? I believe so. I feel that I should have repented, thus depriving myself of this consolation, small to-day, precious indeed to-morrow. I was seduced by a certain air of *sacrifice* ; I forgot that sacrifices of this kind

are more easy at first than later. It is well to think of those days when sorrow will return without the excitement and distractions of the *debut*, sad and lonely, comparing the present with the past, the void with the happy possession. These relapses no mourner escapes; flesh and blood are never so entirely subdued that they do not return at times to assert their claim. Let the eye then have its solace.

Besides, this will not be only a solace to the eye. All the blessed thoughts which God has sent me since yesterday, will not this portrait help me to recover? The other will present my daughter to me living, smiling, each time, saying to me: "She lives no longer, she smiles no more." This will bring her back to me dead, but saying to me all that she has said during these two days, and all that she will say to me till the final moment of my own life.

Seven o'clock.

ONE thing that she has said to me, again and again, is to hold myself ready, always ready, to rejoin her. To be ready! There are many ways of being ready, and amongst them there are those which are but little Christian, without

mentioning those that are not at all so. To be without fear, because one thinks one's self to be without reproach, to call one's self ready, because one does not know what it is to be prepared—~~is~~ ignorance or pride; it is not faith.

But one can hold a far more christian view, and still on this subject remain under great delusion.

Do I believe myself ready, because I have received several of those warnings, which reminded me that I ought to be so? Shall I believe myself ready because under the excitement of sorrow and bereavement I feel myself drawn towards another world?

Shall I believe myself ready, because that in a transport of faith I have caught a glimpse of eternal felicity?

All this may be but a presumptuous ardor, embracing the end, but leaving aside the mean and the endeavor. It is sad to have to distrust even those thoughts that an open tomb may have given rise to. But there is a danger, a very great danger here. Let us then watch.

How many errors sometimes lodge in a house of mourning! And if I say: How much blasphemy also! shall I be saying too much *I have trembled more than once, when I have*

seen the right of the sovereign judge openly usurped ; when I have heard placed among the redeemed, almost among the saints, such a departed one whose destiny, on the contrary, has given me cause for serious alarm. More than once have I been tempted to believe it a frightful satire. But no ; it was in earnest. The departure of the wicked has only served to confirm some in their ideas of the gate being wide, and heaven open to all comers.

May not the innocent death of a child be liable to encourage the same error ?

Without a doubt I can behold her in the bosom of God ; but I ought not to forget that I am not, for that reason, myself, the child assured, there to find a place. I can thank God that death hath presented himself to me under such a sweet image ; but would it be right or good that death should never cause me any more alarm, never again in anything. Should I thus be truly ready ?

To be ready is not merely to yield one's self to the will of God as to time ; it is above all to throw one's self on His mercy as to that which is to follow death. To be ready, is to have lived in the constant view of His mercy, the sole hope of the sinner.

To be ready is not so much to be ready to die, a thing at times easy enough, as to be ready if the will of God be so, to pass through a state of suffering which may fill up a lifetime.

To be ready, in a word, is never to think one's self ready, but to accept in advance all that God may see good to send to those who are endeavoring to prepare themselves. He alone can judge if His work be fully accomplished in the soul; at the most we can only declare the commencement. And this, my child, is why I cannot reply to thee to-day, nor perhaps later: "I am ready." I can reply: "God grant I may be ready." Thou hast at least taught me to ask this of Him.

Besides, does not all that relates to death remind us of our misery? God hath not willed that the longest preparation, even the most christian, should assure to us a death without all fear. I knew a person who had witnessed many deaths, and could give admirable exhortations on the subject, who, when death approached he was afraid, not of the great hereafter, for she loved the Saviour too well, but was afraid as she told me herself, of the act of dying itself, the awful passage. But she took this as one ought to take, in such a case, a salutary *humiliation*, a warning never to believe on



selves beyond the fear of death, and, finally, when the moment came, all fear was taken away. It might have been otherwise, alas! One converted on the eve of dying may have a triumphant death; a christian long ripe may depart humbly, even timidly. The crown, without doubt, will be none the less bright; but God would that he should, and that we should understand by his example that our strength is not our own, and that all depends on the measure given in our time of need.

Eleven o'clock.

THIS evening has had its painful moments. I had spoken of these, and when I spoke of them, it is probable I felt them coming. Shall I have the humiliation of being less satisfied with myself than on the last evening? I fear so. It is true that even this humiliation may prove to be a subject of satisfaction, for it is always good to have gained some experience. It must never be that we should believe ourselves beyond the reach of sorrow, above the assaults of trial; to rise, we must first descend. The greatest christians have passed through this. "I suppress my grief as much as possible," said Calvin, under

a great trial. "My friends do their duty ; but they and I gain but little (ground)." Little ! no : This little is a great deal, and Calvin assuredly was not long in discovering this. This little is the groping (if I may so call it,) of the soul after the strength and blessing of God, to enable it to become conformed to His will.

These heavenward gropings God will not permit to be lost.

But there are not only trials in this world, there are also sorrows ; and if these sometimes arrive without sufficient cause, how should they not when trouble opens the door ? Then one is too apt to forget the good things one still possesses, or if remembered, it is but to attach a fear to every hope and to every joy some bitterness. Thus have I done this evening ; was it ingratitude ? God is my witness, that I have endeavored to chase from my mind all that could be. That which He hath taken away shall not make me forget what He hath left me. But it might please Him to take away more, and this is neither ingratitude nor distrust to meet a possibility which has been realized by so many. Then, by the side of fear, and up to a certain point, independently of fear, there is a general *sensitiment* of the fragility of all things, and of the

emptiness of all our hopes, the vanity of every earthly project. One may well indeed come to the christian conclusion to lay hold of the only hope, to aspire to the true good ; this nothingness and void arrest one. It is chilling and alarming. One laments for the works one has the most seriously and piously pursued. One asks wherefore one should recommence on the morrow, or how possibly begin with any degree of ardor or taste. One perceives one's self perpetually condemned to weave a fabric which the slightest breath may rend in pieces. One says to one's self with Bossuet, not in a transport of eloquence, with a bitter, poignant sincerity, that if one had never been born, nothing had been changed in the world. That which I have done another could have done ; and if none had ever done it, what would have it signified ? The tempest would have but one vessel the less to have wrecked, one tent the less to have swept away.

One glides rapidly downwards by this train of thought ; happily one also arrives as quickly to some degree of alarm with the distance one has made. All these bitter things I said to myself this evening. Were they really in my heart ? No. *As a child likes to raise the dust in his*

path, I was tempted to raise, as a cloud of dust around myself, all this *debris* of happiness, and the more sombre the cloud became, the more it seemed to please me, but this was but the sport of a child ; serious sport, nevertheless sport.

No ; this dust is not the true atmosphere of earth. In this nothingness, this void, there is a somewhere to place our feet. A work, religiously accomplished is never null, never lost, never swept away entirely by any wind that may pass over it. Duty is a reality, a living and consoling reality. Thou askest wherefore shouldst thou recommence to-morrow ? Because God wills it. Thou askest how thou canst recommence without disgust ? In remembering, I would say, that all labor is for God. Does thy fabric fall to pieces ? God hath imposed upon thee the labor, not the success. Thou sayest thou wouldst that thou hadst never been born ! It is possible ; but thou art born, and thy task is with thee. Thou sayest that another could have performed it ? Perhaps so ; but it is for thee to do it. Thou sayest that nothing would have been changed in the world ? An error this ; thou hast thy place in the sovereign plan, and, though it be no larger than a grain of sand on the seashore, it is enough *that God hath assigned this place to thee, and*

thou hast no liberty to despise it, or to despise thyself. Will the soldier despise himself because he is in the rear-rank? Will he also say, that without him the army would none the less be the army? Were he to say so, it would prove that he understood nothing of his duty or his post. But a soldier would not say this on any account. On watch, though buried as it were in the depth of a wood, he feels himself as much the representative of the cause, the keeper of the colors, in the last rank as if he were in the foremost.

In the army of Christ, fore-rank, hind-rank, are but words. Each soldier depends immediately on his supreme head; each has received the honor of the keeping of the ensign, and if one may have specially received it, it is not the happiest or the greatest, but great or little, it is he who suffers, who endures most. Dyed in the blood of Jesus, the symbol of regeneration through suffering, of glory through shame, he loves this holy ensign to be borne by the hand that trial has consecrated, for then it is, above all, that the world, even the infidel world, is forced to respect it. Yes! It is to the afflicted above all that the task is given to make *the power of the Gospel shine forth before all*

men. They have preëminently the demonstration of this in their hands, and Jesus will speak, will triumph by each one of these. Then, here again, is another remedy against the overwhelming depression which affliction may produce. I have said that a common task for all exists, and claims our energies. I did not say enough : it is ever increasing, and God is at hand to increase our strength in proportion to our need. Could you have had any reason, before trial, for thinking yourself lost in the universe, useless to your fellow-creatures, null in the Divine plan.—You will have *none* afterwards. God's plan is that faith should quicken you, and that this quickening should proclaim faith. God's plan is that you should take up your task with a purer zeal, a truer charity, that His name may be glorified.

That which, thanks to His grace, I have been enabled to say to myself, I would repeat to whomsoever may be tempted to sit down listlessly on the ruins of some broken happiness.

Have I vanquished, I myself, vanquished this temptation ? I do not flatter myself. It may return ; it may still more than once or twice reconquer me. Ah ! my brethren, weary and discouraged ones, let us hold out the mutually sympathizing hand, and let us not be too exacting

that he who has pointed out the way should be the first to walk in it. The mission which God has confided to us in the world, let us all endeavor to fulfill it first of all with one another. Let us unite in common our prayers, our efforts, our afflictions. Let no one shut himself up in his own peculiar suffering; let each feel himself responsible for the discouragement of his companions in trial, in suffering. Thus in the army of the Lord will the privileged troop be established, rich in his wounds, strong in the blood shed, sustained and reanimated at all times by **Him** who hath vanquished death.

Tuesday Morning, eight o'clock.

YESTERDAY, the day which alarmed me so much in prospect of its sadness and length, I am almost ready to regret. It was the calm interval amid the tempest of mourning; the silent course of this season of trial ushered it in. A soul thus shaken attaches itself speedily to whatever it may meet; the habits of two days, become a kind of support, and the soul shudders to see them about to be interrupted. Then comes, instead of this degree of calm, which ended in producing a sort of charm, the emo-

tions of the third day, the funeral accompaniments, the final parting. I have said what this will be to myself; I have not said, it is scarcely possible to say, what it will be to another heart. But this heart leans on me, and I must find fortitude for both; at present I have but too little for one. Hence arises an apprehension which oppresses me. I have spoken of habit. That most rapidly acquired, and most pleasant, was to pass as much time by the side of the child as other calls upon me permitted. What will this empty, forsaken chamber henceforth be to me? Will it not appear more vacant than if it had never been inhabited, more naked and bare than if it had never been adorned with these flowers and wreaths, and that sweet radiance which the face of our little angel shed over it?

Yesterday, and even this morning, I feared that death might have envied us this last happiness. But no, the brow is as pure, the whole face as gracefully serene, as at the first moment. Let those who may despise these smiles of death, these charms promised to the sepulchre! I bless God, for my part, for having preserved them to us, for this pleasure to my eye will remain a pleasure to my memory and heart. But these *last hours renew and revive every thing*; recol-

lections and scenes do not gradually succeed each other ; they crowd, they crush and whirl themselves into the mind. I admire while I deplore the fidelity of my memory, finding the smallest little facts condemning me to all the associations which so deeply wound. I think less of the circumstances attending the illness and the death which returned so vividly the day before yesterday.

Now they are recollections of health, of her little games, her pleasant laughter, of innocent joys ; a thousand things, also, which did not concern the child herself, which had never even attracted her attention, yet, which by some inexplicable association of ideas, come and mingle themselves with this whirlwind of *souvenirs*. It seems that she was not merely one of the charms of my life ; she was the centre, almost the sole object of it. Absurdity, absurdity ! Nevertheless, this will not astonish any one who has passed through like trials. Ah, how rich we are in reasons for loving the creature ! How skillful we are in adding to their number. If all this could, at some blessed moment, become love to God ! If God were thus to become the centre and sum of our lives, the creature would love everyone as much, but in another way ;

would love them in God, as we shall love them a little later in heaven.

This is another of the phases of the LIFE ETERNAL, unique in its essence, but a phase which is one of the most difficult to realize on earth.

Ten o'clock.

IT is to take place at eleven. The last preparations must be thought of. But first—the last adieu of the mother.—I am silent; I have said why.

Half-past Ten o'clock.

IT was a great relief to me to have these adieux no longer in prospect. The bouquet of violets was taken away; the child was still left to me.

The coffin expected since yesterday came, hidden, vacant, but too sure not to remain vacant. A soft cushion was at the head. I took the child and laid her in it.

How quickly told! scarcely a line. And yet how much in that one line may there not be? Yes, just such is the end of all human existence, whether it be long or short, surrounded by indifference or love. A little more or a little less of *trembling* of the hands which places one in his

coffin—that is all. But when the hands tremble with emotion as did mine, what a moment! and if outward agitation can be told in a line, how many pages would be necessary to recount what is felt.

A crowd of thoughts blend themselves with the liveliest sorrow. The coffin is as the visible, palpable measure of our nothingness. When the orator before the coffin, if it contain a hero, shall say: "Come and see the little which remains of so much glory and grandeur!" the father, before that of a child, shall say: "see here that being which was all the world to us, and seemed to fill all the world, so much did the latter seem embellished and animated by her!" The coffin is also the evident demonstration of the futility of all our earthly hopes. Here one seems to see years and tens of years folded up as a vesture, and enclosed with her to whom they once seemed promised. The coffin—and here it is, above all, that the heart is ready to break—the visible entrance to that abyss whence none ever return. The abyss waits; the grave demands its prey, and is impatient for it. It must be that you deliver up to it your beloved dead, and on closing the coffin you definitively place *among the ranks of the deceased the one*

whom in your love you have still considered as yet appertaining in some degree to the living world.

And here there is, as I have experienced, a double source of bitterness : to condemn yourself, for these last days, not to see again that being so much contemplated, so often looked upon, to forbid yourself to see again that which charmed both the eyes and the heart. At this moment, in vain faith protests ; in vain simple reason protests. One cannot but take pity on him who is bound to be shut up in this narrow, dark prison, to be sealed there for ever ; one persists in attributing to him the regret and the distress of the living. The pagans supposed even those in Elysian happiness to be subject to suffering ; they depict them as never attaining to a state free of regret for the earth. But paganism is human ; there is a spot of paganism in all of us. When one takes flowers to a tomb, it may be a tomb closed for years, are not such flowers always chosen which he who lies buried there preferred ? Is there not then within you a something which believes that he still retains the tastes of the past, still relishes the enjoyments which the visible world yields, and you try to satisfy him *at least in one*. There is a sweetness in this

sentiment; and there is bitterness in that which, when you yourself have closed a coffin, makes you feel for a time that you have robbed your child of the flowers, the sunshine, the pure air, all that the world can promise or give to the living. I drew back a long time, a very long time, from this supremely trying moment. Pity for myself seemed to justify my pity for her; and to give her still time to take her adieu of the light, and me to contemplate her again, to take her little hands in mine, to kiss once more her forehead, to murmur to her a few more words. At length, as if rending asunder a chain which bound me, I arose. "Adieu," I said, "adieu!" I closed the coffin, and imposed upon myself never to unclose it more.

I have kept my word. I could see her again; I will not see her again. I have yielded enough, too much, perhaps, to this weakness of the flesh. Too much? No. I believe these yieldings will leave me now more at liberty than if I had combatted these weaknesses less. My eyes are satisfied with all the charm and all the sorrow which this contemplation could offer me. No regret will remain for the employment of these two days; I have lost nothing by it. The heart of the Father is satisfied; he will let the heart of

the Christian recover its strength and regain its empire.

Noon.

ALL is over.

Before the departure, the pastor assembled us around the Bible. To the Bible be the first and the last word in all things. What authority it gives to him who comes to speak (in presence of a coffin, one hand on the holy book, the other pointing to Heaven,) of life and immortality! It is no longer he who speaks; it is in a sense no longer it; it is the voice of all those who have believed in it, and through it, of those who are consoled, saved; it is the voice also of this new guest of heaven who is there waiting to receive you. We heard this voice. The divine promises were renewed again in it; our hearts opened as to a new unexpected revelation of those holy truths of which we had never doubted. Also, when we came to the prayer, the signal, alas! of the departure so much dreaded, it was then that we were able almost without effort to offer once more to God, by the trembling lips of the pastor, the child which He had taken to Himself.

Shortly after, the procession moved along the

street, the little bier covered with flowers ; and this was, as it were, the picture of the journey we have all to take. In advance, the deceased, behind, the weeping friends ; but through their tears they perceive the flowers, the crown. It is death embellished, death crowned, death triumphant, glorious, happy. The mystery is thus revealed to them, and they are ready to follow, without effort, wherever it may please God to lead them ; and, if it be His will, to attain the end speedily, to become in their turn this emblem to others.

While I was thus absorbed in meditation, reality followed its course, and soon arose before us the great gate which continually opens to let one pass in who shall never go out again.

I have never accompanied a funeral to the cemetery without being reminded of that impressive chapter in which the prophet describes the dead as going to meet a newly deceased one, and hailing him with sombre joy, "Art thou also become like unto us?" It is true that this dead one is a King, and a great King, whose fall has profoundly moved the occupants of Hades. But it nevertheless seems to me that I see this severe jurisdiction of the sepulchre, exercised upon all who enter it, as a primary judg-

ment of God. As each enters, I seem to look from the long line of tombs how the new corpse is received ; I have heard sweet words of welcome, and I have also heard terrible ones.

Happy are those who are sure beforehand of hearing, as it were arising from the depth of the tombs, only the murmurs of love and welcome. I have heard this. The dead congratulated Madeleine on having entered so young into the rest of the Lord ; they repeated to me : “ See the little children to come unto Him ! ” and the children joining their voices to the others hailed their new companion with the sweet words they had learned in Heaven.

It is amongst these that I have left her ; that part of the field of the dead where those of the city repose. Of whom has she taken place ? I know not. Who, one day, will take hers ? A child yet unborn, if even those whom this child shall be born are yet among the living. A little more or a little less crowded generations must succeed each other in this field of death, as they do those fields which they cultivate, or as they do in our noisy, busy cities ; I love that my child should repose in this historic earth where for many ages have slept the dead of the ancient city of Geneva. All those q

erations which I called up around her baptism, I now evoke around her tomb, not to do her honor, assuredly not, but that she may be happy, and proud of this distinction, and to fortify myself by the recollection of the great courage of those who have there found a last resting place. Ah! how much would they have preferred to have borne their children hither, than to have left them (as many were called to do) in the power of the persecutors of the faith! Those parents who were privileged to bring their children with them into the city of refuge, and to see them there born at the foot of the cross of Christ, how happy! How well these knew, when God recalled his gifts, to console themselves, in giving themselves to Him, and laboring twofold more for the advancement of His reign. About forty feet or more, from this tomb, to which I shall often return, a stone marks the spot where Calvin rests. His three children were taken before he was called away, and this he said when one of them died: "God has given me a son; God has taken him away. Have I not ten thousand children in the christian world?"

Here is the grand secret for filling up the great void often made in our hearts, viz: to la-

bor according to our strength in the work of God upon earth. A Calvin will recruit soldiers of the cross by tens of thousands ; another, may be painfully, by twos and threes ; another can but humbly make Him known, under the pressure of some severe trial, by his patience and resignation. There is work to be done which demands eloquence and genius ; works of great practical usefulness, demanding large gifts ; there is also the giving of a cup of cold water more eloquent, often, than the most eloquent words, more productive of good than the gift of treasures.

To labor on, no matter how, with God, is not this the surest way never to feel ourselves far from Him—without Him? Yes, they were right the great christians of the past ; for it is in giving ourselves to Him that we attain to the ability to give, definitively and without reserve, all that He sees good to take—riches, friends, parents or children.

Adieu then, once more, dear Madeleine, sweet little angel ! The history of these three days will be, I know, the history of many more. These alternations of rising and falling will repeat themselves ; these holy resolutions which *God hath enabled me to make*, may waver

times ; this poor heart, which at moments almost mounts up with joy, I feel already floating on the waves of sadness. I have said adieu to thee, my daughter, again and again ; and I shall often call to thee as if thou couldst answer me ; I shall seek thee as though I ought to find thee ; happy if I vex not myself with thy silence, thy absence, and if I can suppress in my heart the culpable murmuring to which it would fain give utterance.

But what reason have I to expect that my apprenticeship should be completed in three days ? God has promised to be with me ; He has not promised to lead me in three days, nor in any set time, into a state where I shall have no longer need of his succour to strengthen me, nor of his grace to pardon weakness, distrust or ingratitude. I spoke two days ago of the seed and the fruit. The seed must have time ; the best fruit is not that which most quickly ripens. I know that the sunshine of grace can work greater marvels than that of nature. But marvels are the exception ; the rule is, that the fruits of trial are produced slowly in the solitude of the heart.

Of this I will try to persuade myself ; I shall not then be too much discouraged when these

failures occur, nor too ready to proclaim a victory.

I shall not deprecate the ordinary duties and cares of life as a burden, nor take them up in a worldly spirit as a distraction. God will teach me to profit by the evil and the good, the common as well as the more elevated things, giving to each its proper place and its true value, for so shall "all things work together for good to them who love God."

To-day all things seem to me to be enveloped in a crape, the sombre shade of which seems to extend itself all around me. But soon through this gloomy mist will all the joys which God hath still left to me begin to delineate themselves, as the smile of a child through its tears. If I were to listen to my feelings of to-day, I should say that I had finished with joy, and might be tempted to think it due to thy memory, Madeleine, to promise to it either indifference or contempt. But no; this is not that which thou expectest of me, for it is not what God requires. That which God wills, that which thou expectest of me, is, that these remembrances of thee should follow me in my joys as well as in my sorrows. In my trouble thou wilt be to me the gentle messenger of heaven, where there is "neither sorrow nor

crying :” in my joys thou wilt tell me that all is passing away, and thou wilt shed over my heart that “sorrow as unto God” which does not discolor this life, but which lends to it the sweet solemnity of Heaven.

Adieu! I would still write more. It seems to me that in laying down the pen I am taking leave of thee again, and that this time is the last.

Adieu! These few pages will help me to find thee again when I have need of thee; but I could indeed find thee without them.

Adieu, till we meet above! *Au revoir*, from here below, every day. Have I not said that faith and sight are two sisters?

Adieu! The earth demands me. Thou wilt prevent my forgetting that Heaven also demands me.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are listed in a vertical column, and the addresses are listed in a horizontal row next to them. The text is very faint and difficult to read, but it seems to contain several names and addresses.













